

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Radhika R. Roy

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Attorney Docket No: 113394 CON

Parent Application Information:

Serial No.: 09/328,667

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:Art Unit: 2663

Filed: 06/09/1999

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:Examiner: DUONG, Duc T.

Title: System and Method for Gatekeeper-to-Gatekeeper Communication

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
WASHINGTON D.C. 20231

SIR:

COMMENT ON PRIOR ART

The specification of the present application discloses three gatekeeper architectures—distributed, hierarchical and hybrid.

During the prosecution of the parent application, serial no. 09/328,667 filed 06/09/1999, applicant ultimately chose to pursue claims directed to the hybrid architecture. The parent application is still pending.

The present application is directed to the distributed architecture, as exemplified in FIG. 1. Here, the gatekeepers are all at the same hierarchical level. In accordance with the distributed architecture, requests for information—such as an address—pass from one gatekeeper to another in serial fashion until a gatekeeper that has the information is reached. The information is then returned to the requesting gatekeeper—possibly over the same path but not necessarily.

This architecture is described, for example, at p. 4, line 9 to p. 5, line 26. For example, gatekeeper 102a can receive from subscriber 101 a query for some kind of information, such as a network address. After receiving the query, gatekeeper 102a can attempt to resolve the query by searching its database for the network address. If

gatekeeper 102a cannot resolve the query, for example, if gatekeeper 102a does not contain a requested IP address in its database, then gatekeeper 102a can query the next gatekeeper, in this case gatekeeper 102b. Gatekeeper 102b receives the query from gatekeeper 102a, and again attempts to resolve the query by searching its database. If gatekeeper 102b cannot resolve the query, then gatekeeper 102b passes the query along to the next gatekeeper, in this case gatekeeper 102c. This process continues until a gatekeeper can resolve the query.

When gatekeeper 102c resolves the query, that is, when gatekeeper 102c searches its database and finds the requested network address, for example, gatekeeper 102c can send the network address back to gatekeeper 102a—possibly along the reverse path that the query was originally sent through gatekeeper 102b but not necessarily (See, e.g., ¶ 0025).

The claims of the present patent application are specifically directed to this distributed architecture. Claim 1, for example, recites that if the information is not known by the first gatekeeper, the first gatekeeper sends the request only to a second gatekeeper (lines 3-4); that if the information is not known by said second gatekeeper, the second gatekeeper sends the request only to a third gatekeeper (lines 5-6), and if the information is known by the third gatekeeper, the third gatekeeper sends the information to the first gatekeeper (lines 7-8). The claim further indicates that the first, second and third gatekeepers are at a single gatekeeper hierarchical level (lines 9-10).

Independent claims 12 and 20 are also directed to this distributed architecture.

Among the prior art cited during the prosecution of the parent application was United States Patent No. 6,298,062 issued 10/02/2001 to Gardell et al. Applicant respectfully requests the examiner to consider the following comments when examining the claims of the present application in view of Gardell or any other prior art that has similar teachings.

Similar to applicant's invention, a gatekeeper in Gardell that does not have the requested information seeks it from one or more other gatekeepers. However, Gardell does not use an architecture of the type set forth in applicant's claims, wherein the

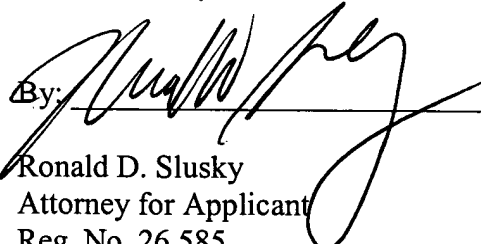
request is passed along from one gatekeeper to the next and then on to the next until the requested information is found.

Rather, Gardell uses a multicast approach wherein, contrary to applicant's claims, the Gardell gatekeeper seeking the information sends a request to other gatekeepers at the same time. See, for example, FIG. 4 of Gardell and the accompanying text at, for example, col 8., lines 18 et seq., showing and describing how the requesting gatekeeper 74 multicasts its request to plural gatekeepers. Only one of those plural gatekeepers—the one that has the requested information—is actually shown in FIG. 4, that being gatekeeper 76. Other gatekeepers receiving the multicasted request are not shown in the FIG. (Col. 8, lines 21-22). Gatekeeper 78 shown in FIG. 4 serves some other purpose and apparently does not receive the request at all.

Moreover, contrary to the operation that occurs in some of applicant's embodiments, the responding gatekeeper in Gardell sends the requested information directly to the requesting gatekeeper—not through some other gatekeeper that had received the request, but did not have the information and passed the request on. Thus Gardell does not meet the language of, for example, claims 2 and 13, which are directed to this implementational aspect of certain of the embodiments.

Respectfully submitted,

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